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FROM

Hon. Dr. Thayer,



PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL

OF THE

General Theatrical Fund,

HELD AT THE

LONDON TAVERN, BISHOPSGATE STREET,

On MONDAY, APRIL 5th, 1852.

SIR EDWARD B. LYTTON, BART, MP.

IN THE CHAIR.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY

KEZIA BREWSTER, HAND COURT, DOWGATE.

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HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

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THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL FITZHARDINGE.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ELLESMORE.

THE HON. SIR THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.

SEVEN I. THE LORD ERNEST BRUCE.

THE FITZHARDINGE BERKELEY, M.P.

INSTRUTHER, BART.

OF — T. M. BART.

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SECRETARY.

MR. CULLENFORD, THEATRE ROYAL ADELPHI,
To whom all Communications are to be addressed.

TO

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART., M.P.

~~~~~  
**SIR,**

I am desired by the Directors of the General Theatrical Fund, to return you their sincere and grateful thanks for the alacrity and kindness with which you accepted the position of Chairman at their Annual Festival in April last. The circumstances under which they were deprived of the announced presence of Mr. Macready, having made the obtaining an efficient substitute a matter both of delicacy and difficulty, but from which they were generously relieved by you.

That you may long continue to be the friend and patron of all institutions, having for their object the independence and comfort of decayed members of Literature and the Arts, is the earnest wish of,

**SIR,**

Your most obedient Servant,

**JOHN B. BUCKSTONE,**

**HON. TREASURER TO THE GENERAL THEATRICAL FUND.**

*November, 1852.*



*Financial Statement for the Year ending February 25th, 1852.*

| RECEIPTS.                       | £ s. d.  | DISBURSEMENTS.                        | £ s. d.    |
|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| By Admission Fees .....         | 34 0 0   | Funeral Expenses of a Member .....    | 10 0 0     |
| By Members' Subscriptions ..... | 438 11 7 | Deceased, M. A. J. .....              | 6 0 0      |
| By Interest .....               | 215 12 7 | To do. H. L. J. G. .....              | 6 0 0      |
| By Profit of Dinner .....       | 160 16 9 | To Children of Member deceased, ..... | 21 6 9     |
| Arrears of 1850 .....           | 9 9 0    | H. E. T. .....                        | 40 0 0     |
|                                 |          | Secretary's Salary .....              | 8 16 0     |
|                                 |          | Printing, &c. .....                   | 3 5 6      |
|                                 |          | General Expenses, &c. .....           | 17 7 0     |
|                                 |          | Arrears .....                         | 407 4 11   |
|                                 |          | To Annuitants' Fund .....             | 344 9 9    |
|                                 |          | To Balance .....                      |            |
|                                 |          |                                       | £858 8 11  |
|                                 |          |                                       |            |
|                                 |          | TOTAL.                                | £ s. d.    |
|                                 |          | To Balance, March 6th, 1851 .....     | 5903 8 8   |
|                                 |          | To Balance, February 25th, 1852 ..... | 344 9 9    |
|                                 |          | Reserve Fund .....                    | 264 11 11  |
|                                 |          |                                       | £6512 10 4 |
|                                 |          |                                       |            |
| ASSETS.                         |          | ASSETS.                               | £ s. d.    |
|                                 |          | By Invested Funds in names of .....   | 5767 8 8   |
|                                 |          | Trustees .....                        | 680 0 0    |
|                                 |          | By London and Westminster Bank .....  | 65 1 8     |
|                                 |          | Cash in Treasurer's hands .....       |            |
|                                 |          |                                       | £6512 10 4 |

Auditors, { H. HORNCastle.  
R. AUSTIN LEE.

WM. CULLENFORD, SECRETARY.



## A D D R E S S.

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In presenting to the Patrons and Friends of the **GENERAL THEATRICAL FUND** the Report of the Seventh Anniversary Festival, the Directors have the cheerful duty of thankful congratulation on the state of the Institution. They feel that supported by the continuance of that distinguished patronage which has been hitherto so kindly bestowed upon the Fund, and presided over by individuals so distinguished as have honoured the Chair on the occurrence of the Anniversaries, there can be no doubt that the **GENERAL THEATRICAL FUND** will be second to no Benevolent Institution in the Kingdom. Still, they feel that much remains to be done—that the objects of the Association are still imperfectly known; and that as each succeeding year will add to the number of claimants, so greater exertions will be necessary to obtain increased support, in order to carry out fully the praiseworthy intentions of its founders. The continued support of the Public is therefore to be desired, and it is hoped that the administration of the affairs is such as to secure that desirable result.

It should be borne in mind, that in this Institution there is *no restriction* whatever; that it is not alone those who have filled London engagements in one or other particular theatre, but that performers over the

ADDRESS.

whole Empire (being members) are objects for its sympathy and relieving care.

The Directors again return their grateful thanks to the Hon. Mr. Justice Talfourd, Charles Dickens, Esq., and Benjamin Bond Cabbell, Esq., M.P., the Trustees of the Fund ; to Benjamin Webster, Esq., W. C. Macready, Esq., Charles Kean, Esq., William Farren, Esq., T. P. Cooke, Esq., and to Mrs. Theodore Marten, late Miss Helen Faucit, for their constant assistance and support from the foundation of the Association.

To Captain Chappell, R.N., John Forster, Robert Clarke, W. H. West Betty, James Davidson, Robert Feast, Charles Manby, W. Gardener, Charles Mears, William Sams, Charles Hill, John Strut, John Marston, John Brady, T. G. Lye, Herbert Sturmy, Walter T. Fawcett, and Henry Hill, Esquires, for their kind and constant patronage.

The Directors also have pleasure in acknowledging their great obligation to the Ladies and Gentlemen of the musical profession, who so ably and kindly assisted them on the day of the Festival, and who have with such continued kindness displayed their friendly interest in the Institution on every Anniversary.

# ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL,

1852.

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ON Monday, the 5th April, 1852, the Members and Friends of this Association, established in 1839, and recently Incorporated by Royal Charter, held their Seventh Anniversary Festival at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate-street, Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer Lytton, Bart., M.P., in the Chair, supporter by Captain Chappell, R.N.; John Forster, Esq.; Charles Dickens, Esq.; Mark Lemon, Esq.; Benjamin Webster, Esq.; J. B. Buckstone, Esq.; T. P. Cooke, Esq.; R. Bell, Esq.; C. Manby, Esq.; T. Willott, Esq.; W. Creswick, Esq.; T. J. Jerwood, Esq.; W. R. Sams, Esq.; and about 140 other Gentlemen.

The dinner, which was admirably served, having concluded, and the cloth removed, "*Non nobis Domine*" was sung by a number of professional Gentlemen.

The CHAIRMAN then rose amidst loud cheers, and said he had to propose a toast which was always the first on the lips of every Englishman. He begged to give them the health of "Her Gracious Majesty the Queen," —(cheers)—and, in doing so, he might be allowed to inform them that their Royal Patroness had, on Saturday

last, enriched the fund, by a further donation of £100.—  
(Cheers.)

The National Anthem having been sung,  
The CHAIRMAN proposed “ His Royal Highness  
Prince Albert, Albert Prince of Wales and the rest of the  
Royal Family.”—(Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN would next call the attention of the company to the Army and Navy, with which he felt he had a sort of professional connexion, having in his earlier days belonged to the Army, though envious fate had opened up to him other means for rendering himself useful than were to be enjoyed in his position as a cornet. It appeared that at the present moment all parties were for calling out militiamen, but as he saw at their table a Gentleman connected with one of the more regular branches of the profession, he would give them “ The Army and Navy,” calling upon Captain Chappell to return thanks.—(Cheers.)

CAPTAIN CHAPPELL, R.N., believed they all knew that he belonged to a profession more given to action than to speaking, and they must therefore excuse him if, in trying to make a speech, he showed any deficiency in a knowledge of his part. He had spent upwards of twelve years of the best part of his life at sea, and seen Nelson on the quarter deck ; and, though it was a long time since he had taken part in his profession, he believed that if his life were to come over again, there was nothing on earth which would make him adopt any other.—(Cheers). He thought there was a good deal of similarity between his profession and that of the actor. They had heard a good deal of the decline of the drama, and

if they had not heard, he had felt the decline of the Navy. (Laughter) For the last thirty years the Government had gone on pulling down the Navy little by little, until it was now low indeed. During the last war, whatever might be the merits of the Army, he believed it was to the Navy that England was mainly indebted for the position she maintained ; and he believed, that should their services be again required, the members of the Navy would be found as willing and able as ever to defend their native land.—(Cheers.) He had shown them that the decline of the Drama and the Navy were simultaneous, and he must now be allowed to allude to one illustrious individual who had done all in her power to stop that decline. Her Sacred Majesty the Queen had shown her sympathy with the Navy, by putting her son into the dress of a tar ; and had shown herself ready at all times to hold out her hand—in the best manner she had been advised to do so—to support the Drama.—(Cheers.) He had seen the Prince in his dress of a tar, a few days since, on Southampton waters, and he trusted that when it came to his turn to act a more important part in life's Drama, he would act it as well as his Royal Parents had done theirs, and that he would ever keep in view the interests of the profession, into which he had been inducted.—(Cheers.) In addition to returning thanks for the Navy he found that he was expected to acknowledgd the compliment paid to the Army. Now, as he had once before said on a similar occasion, in the presence of his friends, Mr. Buckstone and Mr. Harley, it was rather hard upon him to expect him to play Box and Cox at the same time.—(Laughter.) He could, however, assure them that he

believed the sister service would ever be as ready and able to do its duty, as efficiently as his own, whenever their services should be required by the country.—(Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN said he had now to propose the toast more immediately connected with the object which had called them together—“Prosperity to the General Theatrical Fund”—(cheers)—which had been established thirteen years, and was now in all the plentitude of health with every prospect of longevity. He felt that a great deal of their prosperity depended upon the labours of those who had undertaken the management of the charity. The great success which had attended them, however, was derived from the fact of recognition of two great principles, upon which he thought every society which had for its object the benefit of the professors of art ought to be founded. The first principle to which he alluded was, that such a Society should partake of the characteristics of a Provident Institution, and that those who claimed the support and sympathy of the public should show that they had, so far as their means would allow them, by their prudence and foresight, endeavoured to provide for any contingency which might arise. One of the principles, therefore, on which this Society was founded, was, that those actors who received its benefits must first have contributed to its funds, thereby raising themselves, should they become destitute and require assistance, from a condition of mendicancy to a position of dignity and honour, their claim to relief being established on a right. Having placed themselves in this position, the public were not called upon to bestow their charity, when they were

asked to assist an Institution established for the protection of those who devoted their lives to the public service, in providing them with rational and intellectual amusement, but they were asked to perform a duty which they alike owed to the actor and to themselves. It was popularly said that property had its duties as well as its rights, but he thought it a more valuable doctrine that poverty, having established its rights by the performance of its duties of foresight and self-denial, in order to provide for adversity, had its claims. Last year, their trustee, Mr. Dickens, who then sat upon his right hand, had taken the Chair at their Festival, and had been nobly supported by the professors of their art, who thereby evidenced that they knew how to perform their duties, and should they unfortunately be overtaken by poverty, they would have a fair claim to support. The second principle upon which their society was founded, was the recognition of the fact that art was impulsive, and could not be confined within any walls of brick and mortar, where it arranged that it might or might not be exercised. (Cheers.) He had seen the public called upon to support societies for the benefit of the actor, who must have served a certain number of years within what were called the temples of the legitimate Drama. These edifices had been endowed by the public, and immortalized by the great names of a Garrick, a Siddons, and a Kean, but they were not now in a condition to carry out the principles on which they were founded. The actor could not appear on their boards—the edifices remained—but so far as they carried out the intentions of the founders they were a mockery and delusion.—(Cheers.)

Indeed, they were the only places in which the English actor could not practise his art, or suffer those vicissitudes which the public were called upon to assist in relieving. In this Society, however, there was no delusion ; and so long as the living Drama happily existed in England, this Society would be faithful to its objects, and the public and the country would know where to find its friends. That Society was not established for the benefit of art, whenever art dispensed its truthfulness ; and so long as it acknowledged the claims of all its professors, no matter what position they held, so long would it be deserving of public support (cheers), and he believed that it would endure so long as the Drama existed, and even after the pyramids should have mouldered into dust—the only requisites for a candidate for its benefits being that he was an artist, and was in misfortune. In the circle of the arts there were none which required so much co-operation and fraternity as that of an actor. An author might not require the assistance of the public, or even of the living, for perhaps his best companions, his best sources of inspiration, would be found in the works of the dead, but the actor's art was necessarily social. The greatest actor produced no impression without the assistance of others. Hamlet must have his gravediggers, and Coriolanus his Volumnia.—(Cheers.) All performers, even in the best of times might, by illness or other unforeseen events, be reduced comparatively low, and looking at the vicissitudes attendant upon an actor's life, it became the duty of the chiefs of the profession, if not of the public, to liberally contribute to the funds of an institution established by actors to

assist themselves—such support being dictated alike by common sense and common justice. He could not conclude these remarks without an expression of his deep regret—a regret which he ought probably have given utterance to at an earlier part of the proceedings of the evening. At the cause which had upon that occasion placed him in the chair and deprived them of the presence of his friend Mr. Macready, he trusted it may be conveyed to that gentleman how deeply they sympathised with him, and their ineffaceable regret at the illness of one who had so long sympathised in all his griefs and partaken of his triumphs, combined with their earnest hope that her health might be happily and permanently restored. That Society had already done good and noble service to the independence and honour of the profession. It has drawn closer together the professors of the art, and shown that that art is too grand to be affected by any monopoly.—(Cheers.) He would conclude by calling upon them earnestly and cordially to drink success to “The General Theatrical Fund.”—(Cheers.)

Mr. BUCKSTONE then rose and said : Gentlemen, I am sure you will all agree with me that no amount of thanks or expressions of gratitude can be sufficiently given by the members and well-wishers of “The General Theatrical Fund” to our distinguished Chairman this evening. Many would have considered it but a poor compliment in being invited to the rescue under the circumstances which have deprived us of the presence of Mr. Macready, and might have demurred in accepting the doubtful honour we would have imposed upon them. But, Gentlemen, on receiving intelligence that domestic anxieties

of an absorbing nature would prevent our promised Chairman appearing this evening in his place, the application to help us in our need was no sooner made to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, than with that unaffected alacrity and goodness of heart which are ever the signs of a noble and a liberal nature, he at once assented. He left us in no doubt on the matter, and with one slight reservation, solely connected with electioneering matters, and in which he is pretty sure to succeed (cheers), he promised to be here, and here he is. The great service he has thus rendered us will never be forgotten by the members of the fund, more especially as this is the second time he has honored and served us by presiding at this Festival. He has recently told us, Gentlemen, and it is very comfortable to know the fact, that we are "not so bad as we seem," and that every man has "many sides to his character." I am sure, Gentlemen, you will acknowledge that, in so readily standing our friend this evening, Sir Edward has shown one of his *very best* sides, and one which must command the respect and approbation of every person present.—(Cheers.) As regards our fund, Gentlemen, to promote the prosperity of which you are assembled here, I am happy to say that were it embodied in a human form, and endowed with the power of speech, it would this evening exclaim that "it was the proudest moment of its life." Indeed, Gentlemen, I will suppose myself the fund, and will address you, stating its birth, parentage, and education, in the first person singular. You must now imagine the fund, with its capital and its large body of members, to be speaking to you in *propria personæ*.

Hem ! Gentlemen : I was born at a very early period of my existence ; or, to speak with greater perspicuity, it is now fifteen years ago since I came into the world. My parents were some Ladies and Gentlemen engaged in literary and dramatic pursuits, who, observing that Mr. and Mrs. Drury-lane, and Mr. and Mrs. Covent-garden possessed two very fine children, but which children had grown so enormously fat, through keeping all the good things that were given them entirely to themselves, without allowing any of their playfellows in the neighbourhood to have the smallest taste of their pudding, or their apple, my parents came to the determination to have a baby of their own (cheers and laughter), who should be reared and educated in such liberal principles, that when it might obtain something nice, every boy and girl in the country should come forward and have a taste, provided they asked in a proper manner.—(Cheers.) On my first appearance in the world, I was looked upon as rather a sickly child. Mr. and Mrs. Drury-lane and Mr. and Mrs. Covent-garden gave it as their opinion that I could not live ; or, if I should perchance exist for a short time, there would be so many hungry ragamuffins to snatch everything out of my hand, that I should perish for want of proper nutriment. However, Gentlemen, in spite of such forebodings, though I was very small at my birth—(laughter)—as many a subsequently great person has often been at that period, I daily increased in size and strength, so carefully was I watched and so well was I nursed. Indeed, nothing could be better than the latter. One of my best nurses is present at this moment, and I can gratefully declare, how-

ever, from month to month that excellent person may have sent out such creatures to other people, that excellent person was never a Mrs. Gamp to me.—(Laughter.) After years of great care, I was discovered to be rather a strong fellow, so much so, that when I occasionally encountered the two big boys of Drury-lane and Covent-garden, I was enabled to give them a thrashing. At last they were both afraid to come out of doors, for one of them has not been seen for several years, and I don't think that the other intends to show himself at present.—(Cheers.) When I attained the age of eight, my parents gave a good dinner, and put me out 'prentice, and once every year since that time they have continued the pleasant practice, when I have been introduced to my friends, who have greatly rejoiced to see how I continued to grow. On each of these occasions my friends always did something handsome for me, till at last the good and gracious Queen of this country hearing much talk of me, and finding that I was an honest, hard-working, liberal fellow, did something handsome for me too, and continues to do so till this day.—(Cheers and laughter.) As this is the Seventh Anniversary of my being put 'prentice, according to the usual terms of such indentures, I am out of my time this evening. I trust, during the period of my service, I have given satisfaction, because I am now about to commence business for myself; and when I tell you that I am master of a capital of nearly seven thousand pounds, I think you will acknowledge that I have every prospect of success in life—added to which, my friends have obtained me a Royal Charter, that will enable me to place my savings out to

much more advantage than I have hitherto done—as it is fit I should inform you that my present capital is invested in the somewhat Utopian attempt to reduce the national debt.—(Laughter.) But now, Gentlemen, by virtue of my Charter I can become a landed proprietor to a very large amount per annum; I can invest my money in the best government and other securities that may present themselves; I can receive legacies; I am, from this day, quite equal in importance to the two big boys I have alluded to; and altogether I have every likelihood of becoming a prosperous gentleman. I have already received notice of one benefit to be derived in consequence of the power so given to me—our old and esteemed friend, Mr. T. P. Cooke, having made his will and left me a legacy of £1,000, with contingent advantages (Loud and prolonged cheers)—“sweet William” has indeed proved true to his early love.—(Cheers.) You will remember that at the annual dinner given me by my parents and friends, I informed you, the latter had always done something handsome for me, I hope on this occasion they will do something handsomer than ever—for the proud position I have achieved, has not been without an “alarming sacrifice” (for my Charter has cost full five hundred pounds); but which I am convinced your liberality this evening will greatly lessen. You also well know that a man, however prosperous in life, will always have some poor relations, and when I inform you that I am already providing for six, to each of whom I allow from £30 to £60 per annum, besides having paid the funeral expenses of many, and given money to their families, I am con-

vinced you will do all in your power to encourage so good a young man.—(Cheers.) And now, having related my autobiography, Mr. Buckstone will resume his own position, and continue his address as my 'Treasurer.—(Cheers.) Gentlemen, though Mr. General Fund, in speaking for himself, may have been a little egotistical, yet I can assure you every word he has uttered is true, and that a more deserving and a more promising person never presented himself to beg your favours. His very pardonable exultation, as regards Drury-lane and Covent-garden, might perhaps have been a little subdued, because those institutions, though compelled to be limited in their circle of benevolence, have given comfort and independence to many a public favourite, while to their existence are we indebted for our own, as Jonathan in America owes his origin to John Bull in England, and with precisely the same propensity to bully his big brother. I have great pleasure in thus slightly alluding to the excellence of the great funds, because there are some valued friends of mine connected with them, who are present this evening with a generous desire to help us, and I only regret that dramatic affairs of late have not given them that consequence they formerly enjoyed. (Loud cheers.) And now, Gentlemen, let me hope you will not forget your usual liberality this evening, and that our worthy Secretary may announce in his customary well-toned and manly voice, some substantial donations. Remember for whom it is we plead. For the declining Actor, the Singer, the Dancer, and the Pantomimist in town and country, for those whose best days have been passed in the effort to instruct and amuse you, and the

time has been, to fight for you ; for it is well-known that in the ranks of Charles the First, and also of William the Third, there were many actor-soldiers who were good men and true ; and at this day, Gentlemen, when invasion has been talked of, and rifle corps contemplated, think of what service a body of good broadswords-men might be, such as we have amongst us ; fancy them advancing to an enemy, and asking in an undertone, “ how he would like to have it ? ” whether in eights or flemishes, with preens, passes, shoulder blows, and head blows ; and as in such combats we always contrive to kill the villain at last, you may easily guess who would get the worst of the encounter.—(Cheers and laughter.) In conclusion, Gentlemen, I must again thank our kind and excellent Chairman, and also our ever-visible Trustee and friend, Mr. Charles Dickens, whose re-appearance at this festive board we can always calculate upon as regularly as the astronomers can reckon upon the return of a comet, though, luckily for us, his visits are not so few and far between as one of those luminaries.—(Cheers.) Our poet tells us, “ If to do, were as easy as to know what were *good* to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men’s cottages princes’ palaces.” Gentlemen, what you have to do is easy enough to accomplish : it is only to be as generous as ever you can this evening ; then, indeed, will our chapels be churches, and we can offer to our poor men that best and happiest of all palaces— the “ cottage of content.”—(Loud cheers.)

Mr. JOHN FORSTER, in rising to propose the health of the Chairman, charged Mr. Buckstone with having been saying, and getting applause for, some of the very

best things he had himself intended to say. After pursuing this strain for some time, amid much laughter, Mr. Forster gave the health of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. *Little Isaac* had remarked of the *Duenna* "that she was a deuced difficult subject to compliment"; and in matters of this kind the result was pretty much the same where there was an entire absence of charms, as in the case of the *Duenna*, and where the charms and claims were superabundant, as in the case of their Chairman. Mr. Forster proceeded to say that what Doctor Johnson had remarked of Goldsmith was to be said with greater truth of Sir Edward Lytton than any man living.—(Cheers.) No man, who had written so variously, had also written so well. As with Goldsmith, so with him, we associate his name with the novel, with the essay, with poetry, with history, with the delicate and generous criticism, with the witty and successful comedy, with the genial enjoyments and laughter of the stage.—(Cheers.) And while he had thus done more various things at a higher pitch of excellence than any of his contemporaries, no man with such various powers had at the same time given them a tendency and application more uniformly generous. Never had he for a moment forgotten the interests of literature, or of any calling or profession connected with it.—(Cheers.) Placed in a condition of independence by his birth and fortune, he had been above the miserable affectation of appearing to condescend to letters, as many dignified authors are in the habit of doing. All his life he had been a working man of letters; and had completely identified himself with the efforts and aims, with the toil

and struggle, with all but the envies and jealousies of the vocation.—(Cheers.) Referring to the expectation indulged by Mr. Buckstone of seeing Sir Edward Lytton again in Parliament, Mr. Forster then glanced at what he had done for his literary brethren during his previous parliamentary career. To Mr. Bulwer chiefly it was that we owe the reduction of what were justly called the taxes on knowledge; he first proposed international copyright; and his exertions secured the dramatic author a proper remuneration for his labours.—(Cheers.) That was not the place to indulge personal feelings, or he might have referred to the long series of years in which he had enjoyed the inestimable advantages of Sir Edward Lytton's friendship. He preferred to say in a more public sense that he stood there that day one of several men more distinguished, authors and artists, who felt that in connection with a certain effort they were at present making in behalf of their common calling, they owed Sir Edward Lytton a debt which could never be repaid.—(Cheers.) If that effort should succeed,—if the plan in which they had embarked, to encourage life assurance and other provident habits among authors and artists, to render such assistance to both as should never compromise their independence, and to found a new institution where honorable rest from arduous labour should still be associated with the discharge of congenial duties—should indeed be carried to a successful issue, then would the greatest glory of it be for ever associated with Sir Edward Lytton's name, as its chief originator, its most effective, most generous benefactor.—(Cheers.) “Gentlemen,” said Mr. Forster

in conclusion, "I give you the health of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, and may it be long before he comes to the possession of a greater fame and fortune than he enjoys even now—I mean

..... that second life in other's breath.

The estate which wits inherit after death."

(Cheers.)

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON had listened with some anxiety to the remarks of his estimable friend, Mr. Forster, in proposing his health, because he felt that the partiality of his friend was making him say more than he thought he deserved. He could not, however, but gratefully acknowledge the kindness of Mr. Forster for the way in which he had proposed his health, and of his other friends for the way in which they had responded to it. In the course of his observations Mr. Forster had been pleased to say that he (Sir Edward) was above the jealousies of a usual literary life ; but if he was so, it was because he had never met with anything to give him cause for jealousy, and he was proud to acknowledge the courtesies and kindnesses which had at all times been extended to him by his literary brethren, and made him feel the truth of the observation that the world they lived in was large enough for all.—(Cheers.) But for the author there was a world still larger than this, the world of their own creation, in which to indulge their fancy and lay up stores of kindness to dispense around them.—(Cheers.) No one knew better than he did the trials and anxieties of an author's life, owing to public caprice —the change of fashion, or a variety of other causes. He was old enough to remember the time when Lord Byron

was dazzling the world with the emanations of his wild and extraordinary genius, and which induced crowds of aspirants after fame to endeavour to follow his footsteps. Lord Byron died—his imitators failed—and the public did not care a single straw about either poets or their poetry for the next quarter of a century. Again thanking them for the honour they had conferred upon him, he would now introduce to them the name of their old friend, Charles Dickens—(cheers)—of whom he must be allowed to say that no man had earned a deeper popularity, or a more just and lasting reputation, having, by his exertions, raised and dignified art as much as he had his own profession.—(Cheers.) It had been said by Lord Jeffries that popularity, such as that possessed by Mr. Dickens, could only be obtained by touching the hearts of the whole people of England. That had Mr. Dickens done. No man ever possessed such a mastery over the hearts of all—the rich and the poor—the inhabitant of the cottage or the palace—as that gentleman; and, moreover, he used that power for the best of all purposes, that of working out a remedy for acknowledged social abuses in Chancery and elsewhere, and to elevate the morals and condition of the people.—(Cheers.) Mr. Dickens had done more to hold the mirror up to nature, to chasten the passions, to excite the tears of sympathy, and to show that however high ancestry might be honoured, the poor were equally honourable for their virtues, than any author of modern times, and his works had become, and would remain, “Household Words” so long as the Saxon language continued to exist.—(Cheers.) He felt the greater pleasure in proposing that

gentleman's health on the present occasion, because he had first become thoroughly acquainted with the real character of Mr. Dickens in his position as actor and stage-manager of those gentlemen who, by their talents, had endeavoured to promote the interests of the Guild of Literature to which Mr. Forster had referred. When he stated what he was sure all who knew him would readily admit, that Mr. Dickens possessed a heart as large as his genius, he could not say more to recommend to their cordial reception the toast he was about to propose—"Health and long life to Mr. Charles Dickens, one of the Trustees of the General Theatrical Fund, and his brother Trustees."—(Cheers.)

Mr. CHARLES DICKENS rose amidst renewed cheering, which lasted some time, and said he could assure them that he really was not using a common form of words, but was honestly expressing the feeling of the moment when he avowed himself at some loss, both to thank the company for their hearty greeting, and to thank his generous friend in the chair for the terms in which he had referred to him. Sir Anthony Absolute was of opinion that in love matters it was best to begin with a little aversion; and if he (Mr. Dickens) could only have started with a little coldness on the part of his friend in the chair, or even a moderate warmth on the part of that audience, it was quite unknown into what an admirable speech he should have presently soared. But a tribute so noble, and a welcome so cordial, he found to be very bad preparations indeed for such an achievement. Before referring to the Fund, which was the main object of interest with all of them that evening,

he would take leave to say that he was exceedingly glad that his friend, the Chairman, had happened to allude to him in that company, in his Stage-Managerial capacity. Because he did particularly desire to express his conviction, in such a company, of all others, that the dramatic profession were very ill served by some misjudging friends, when they supposed that it could possibly be injured by, or could possibly regard with anything like resentment or jealousy, Amateur Theatricals.—(Cheers.) He had, for a brief space, assumed the functions of an amateur manager and actor, in furtherance of a cause in which his warmest sympathies and aspirations are—like those of his friend in the chair—enlisted ; and to represent that the stage could possibly be injured, or could fairly claim any right to consider itself injured by such performances was to exclude it from the liberal position assumed in such wise, by every other liberal art.—(Cheers.) In literature, there were received, freely and without cavil, amateurs of all kinds—physicians, lawyers, officers of the army and navy, merchants' clerks who travelled, and saw strange countries—lords and ladies of various degrees—anybody who had anything to say—and possibly now and then somebody who had nothing to say.—(Cheers and laughter.) During the whole of the last season, a gallery was opened in Pall Mall for the exhibition of pictures of amateur artists ; yet he never heard that the members of the Royal Academy were much aggrieved by the circumstance, or very desperately alarmed by its public patronage and success. So, in music. He believed it was generally acknowledged that some excellent lessons had been given to the public and

the profession, by the knowledge and patience of amateurs in chorus singing, and that the production of some of the most admired works of the old masters were due to the exertions of amateurs, without the least injury to the regular professors of the art. The liberal and generous feeling which thus distinguished other kindred arts, surely was to be claimed for the Stage, as *its* just characteristic too ; and could not be better claimed for it than at the Anniversary celebration of its most comprehensive and its least restricted Institution.—(Cheers.) With reference to the General Theatrical Fund, he had been so often before them as one of the Trustees, that he found it very difficult to say anything relative to it which he had not said before, or which they did not all know as well as himself. Independently of the fact that their fund had been established seven years, and that their position was steadily improving every time they met together, the eloquence of their Chairman in proposing the toast of the evening, and their Treasurer's admirable acknowledgment of it had completely exhausted the subject, and he now stood before them a bankrupt Trustee without a leg to stand upon.—(Laughter.) If he could only have found one good vice in the management, he would have been well set up in business for the evening, and might have remained in a perfectly self-satisfied condition until next year. If, for instance, he could only have complained that the Institution was expensively managed, that there was nobody connected with the management who had any sympathy with the unfortunate members of the Dramatic profession ; that none of them had had any experience of the habits or struggles of

poor actors ; if he could only have said that their Treasurer was a stern, austere man (Laughter), altogether a hard-favoured person, severe of countenance and very difficult to approach (Laughter) ; or if he could have said that the Institution was exclusive in its nature, one that required candidates for admission to its benefits to have complied with some trifling condition—reasonable, but not easy—such as having held an engagement for two or three consecutive years in the moon, or having appeared in Sir Edward Lytton's *Money* 200 or 300 nights before the Esquimaux ; if he could have found any such trifling ground of complaint, he would have been at no loss for a topic. But, whereas in the General Theatrical Fund, the low comedian was not expected to have fulfilled those consecutive engagements in the moon ; the tragedian was not required to have played Evelyn 200 or 300 consecutive nights in the icy regions of the North ; Fenella, the sister of Masaniello, was not refused relief because she was only a dancer—nor Masaniello himself because he was only a singer.—(Cheers.) He had nothing left to say, in lieu of that great speech he might, and indisputably would, under these happier circumstances have made, but that he wanted a grievance.—(Cheers.) Indeed, he was so utterly at a loss for a grievance that he had had serious thoughts of abandoning these festivals altogether, and taking to attending those banquets which he sometimes saw advertised to take place in the neighbourhood of Freemasons' Hall, where he was informed that he could find all these causes of complaint ready made to his hand.—(Cheers and laughter.) Like his friend, Mr.

Buckstone, however, he did not wish to indulge in any unkind expressions towards the other theatrical funds, as some old and esteemed friends of his were connected with them, and as he would wish to make them also the friends of this Institution.—(Cheers.) What he would suggest afar off, was, that these funds should make some change in their constitution adapted to the altered times, and he thought there was nothing so likely to reconcile all differences, and to do so much good to all parties, as a happy marriage.—(Cheers and laughter.) All he would say in his official position was, that the General Theatrical Fund was progressing steadily; that they had not the slightest difficulty to state to that company; and that the Institution was steadily and gallantly supported by the members of the profession.—(Cheers.) All who had the least theatrical experience must know how necessary it was in any play, in order to ensure success, that it should possess some female interest; no institution could succeed that was not backed by that influence (cheers); and, therefore, it was with great pleasure that he learned from their worthy Secretary that a large portion of their subscribers consisted of the gentler sex.—(Cheers.) Nor were they wanting there, to shed on the assembly a grace which nothing else could give to it; for whether he looked before or behind him (and here he might be allowed to say that he almost regretted to occupy one of the posts of honour, and wished he were situated among some of his friends in a more private station at the side of the room (laughter), he met with nothing but beaming faces, encouraging and gentle looks.—(Cheers.) On the part of his brother Trustees, and on his own behalf, he begged to acknow-

ledge the toast with many thanks; and he begged to assure those present that they need not be in the least afraid, that evening, of troubling either the Treasurer or the Trustees by swelling their contributions in support of the Fund to an inconvenient amount; for they were perfectly ready to bear with the utmost cheerfulness the heaviest total with which they might think fit to burden them.

The CHAIRMAN would next propose to them the name of a gentleman who had ever devoted his talents, his fortune, and his energies to the loyal upholding of the dignity and honour of the stage, and had never desecrated it by attempts to reduce his company and destroy its respectability by the feebleness of the performances he offered to the public. He felt that a great debt of gratitude was due to that gentleman, not only for the liberal encouragement he had given to modern art and modern dramatists, but for the excellence with which he had presented to the lovers of the drama the masterpieces of Shakespeare, Beaumont, and other old writers.—(Cheers)

While they spoke of him as a manager—and as one who studied the interests of his company—they must not forget the merits of Mr. Webster as an actor.—(Cheers.) The value of Mr. Webster in that capacity he need scarcely allude to, because it had long since received the stamp of public appreciation.—(Cheers.) No one who had seen him in his excellent and masterly delineation of Tartuffe could fail to perceive that had he made the range of that description of comedy his peculiar study, he would have gone far beyond the great body of his competitors.—(Cheers.) In conclusion he would give them “The health of Mr. Webster,” a man who was

just in all his dealings, and faithful in all his engagements.—(Cheers.)

MR. WEBSTER was deeply grateful for the compliment paid to him, though he was not egotistical enough to believe that all the merit was due to him that their respected Chairman had been pleased to express; but he could assure them that, to encourage the drama to the best of his ability, in its highest and most intellectual walks, had been at all times the endeavour of his life.—(Cheers.) The drama of this country, he considered, stood in a prouder position than that of any other country in Europe—for England alone had given birth to a Shakespeare, whose works enlisted the sympathies of all, and by their truthfulness to nature spoke home to the hearts of the people of all nations and all ages.—(Cheers.) In the present day, the drama owed much to the genius of their distinguished Chairman.—(Cheers.) And he should like to see the man who, having witnessed the performance of one of that gentleman's dramas or comedies, had not been electrified by his spirit—whose sympathies had not been enlisted in the fortunes of the people of his conception, or who had not been sent home happy to bed.—(Cheers.) A worthy companion to their chairman in dramatic literature was his old and esteemed friend Sheridan Knowles (Cheers); and next they had the finished comedies of Douglas Jerrold (cheers), and the lively pieces of his friend Buckstone.—(Loud Cheers.) Whilst the English stage possessed such authors as these, they need not despair of the drama (cheers); and he trusted the international law of copyright would prove of advantage to them, and that the English stage would never

imitate the example of some of its foreign contemporaries, and fall into the pit of exalting vice instead of promoting virtue.—(Cheers.) Both as an author and an actor he had derived great pleasure in listening to the very satisfactory position of the fund, and he could assure them that it would always be his best endeavour to support the art of the actor in its purest and most poetical position, and to assist a fund which must tend to do so much towards securing the respectability and independence of its members.—(Cheers.) As he had alluded to the dramas of Douglas Jerrold, he could not sit down without asking leave to propose the health of a gentleman he saw near him, whose name was almost indissolubly associated with the success of some of the principal of those dramas, and who had imparted that life to them which ensured their popularity on the stage—he meant Mr. T. P. Cooke—(loud cheers)—who, with the true liberality of one of those nautical heroes he had so often represented, had left by his will the magnificent legacy of £1,000 to the funds of the Institution, with contingent advantages.—(Cheers.)

MR. T. P. COOKE, who was received with loud cheers, said that he was completely taken by surprise by the toast they had just drank, and after the many eloquent speeches they had heard that night, he felt he could not say anything to enlist their attention, though he was deeply grateful for the compliment paid him.—(Cheers.) The communication that has been made to you, relative to the legacy I have left this fund, it was not my intention should be made public, but was meant only for my friend Buckstone's private ear; it seems, however, that if I had determined to "do good by stealth and blush to

find it fame," he has determined it should not be so, and if it can be productive of the slightest good to the fund, by stimulating others to "go and do likewise," he is perfectly right, and I can have no wish to keep it secret; but do most fervently hope that my poor example may be numerously and largely followed by those who have better means than myself, particularly by my more wealthy professional brethren; for myself I feel I have merely performed a duty in first providing for those near and dear to me, and then remembering others by whose assistance I have been enabled to do so. In conclusion, I would beg to suggest that all present would study the instructions recently given by the Lord Chancellor for making a will, and if they have anything to give to bestow it on the poor player, who has strutted and fretted away his existence for your amusement, for of this be assured that no legacy can be better or more prudently bestowed.—(Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN was sure they could not part without expressing their obligations to those gentlemen connected with the literature of their art who had honoured them with their company that evening.—(Cheers.) He would not, upon the present occasion call upon their friend Mr. Buckstone to acknowledge the toast, as he had already so eloquently addressed them—and he was sure that his friend, Mr. Robert Bell, whose delightful comedies they all admired (cheers), would be happy to have the opportunity of doing so.—(Cheers.) They were also favoured with the presence of their friend Mr. Mark Lemon, whose wit and humour added a charm and polish to the lighter drama.—(Cheers.) Trusting that the future productions of these gentlemen might be as sharp as

a *Lemon*, and possess the power of acid—be as sound as a *Bell*, he begged to give them “Dramatic Literature and Mr. Robert Bell.”—(Cheers.)

Mr. ROBERT BELL responded to the toast.

Mr. BUCKSTONE then proposed “The health of the Professional Ladies and Gentlemen who had contributed to the amusement of the evening,” for which he was sure they were all deeply grateful.

It being now past midnight, the Chairman retired, followed by the greater portion of the company, and the festivities of the evening were brought to a close.

In course of the evening the following list of subscriptions was read by Mr. Cullenford :—

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The Musical arrangements, under the direction of Mr. J. H. Tully, were of a most *recherche* description, including, as instrumentalists, the Hungarian musicians and the Messrs. Distins; and as vocalists, the Misses Pyne, Miss P. Horton, Miss Ransford, Miss Sophy Law, Miss Clari Fraser, Messrs. D. W. King, Genge, Weiss, Horncastle, Ransford, W. J. Ransford, Binge, &c., &c. Mr. Toole officiated as toast master with his accustomed ability.

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